

IEPs and GLEs: A Process for Estimating a Student's Present Levels of Performance (PLOP) in Relation to Vermont's Grade Level Expectations

The Present Levels of Performance (PLOP) statement is the foundation used by IEP teams to create a program of supports and services that capitalizes on a student's unique strengths and addresses the student's specific academic needs. It provides a starting point for crafting appropriate goals and objectives, and serves as a baseline for measuring future progress. There are a number of reasons why the IEP team might want to describe present levels of performance, at least in part, in relation to Vermont's Grade Level Expectations (GLE). It can help ensure that IEP priorities are linked to classroom priorities, increasing the student's access to the general curriculum. It can also provide common criteria for measuring success. When it is clear that a student is lagging behind classmates, the GLE can help the IEP team determine how far behind. When the student succeeds on an IEP goal, the GLE can provide a useful sequential framework for determining what should come next. Finally, linking IEPs and GLEs can help maximize the performance of students with disabilities on state and local assessments, improving the school's chances of meeting accountability objectives. This paper describes a process that can be used by IEP teams for locating the GLE that provides the best match with a student's Present Levels of Performance.

What You'll Need: A copy of Vermont's Framework of Standards and Grade Level Expectations (available as a download on the [department's Web site](#)); current test scores, work samples or other instructional materials that provide information about the student's skills, knowledge and general levels of achievement; an educator or two who have worked closely enough with the student to know what s/he can and can't do academically.

What You Should Do:

1. Pick one content area (Reading, Writing, Math, Science, etc.) for review. Based on the student's current instructional objectives, work samples and individual assessment results in that content area, estimate the grade level at which the student seems to be learning and achieving. This grade level will serve as your starting point.
2. Locate the GLEs for your starting point. Begin with the first strand at that grade level and look at the GLEs that are listed under each. Pay particular attention to the information in each GLE that is underlined because underlining indicates the "new learning" for that particular grade. Was your estimate correct, that is, do the underlined portions of each GLE match what you know about the student's current instructional priorities and classroom performance?

If the answer is YES, skip ahead to step 5.

If the answer is NO...

3. Correct your estimate by looking at the GLE at adjacent grade levels. Continue to move up or down grade levels until you locate the GLE that provide the best match for your student, keeping in mind that the student's complete GLE profile may range across several grades within the strand. Correct the estimate to reflect the grade levels and GLE that would provide the most accurate indicators of the student's Present Levels of Performance.

4. Using the language of the GLE, note both what the student can and can't do, focusing in on the point of academic development that Vygotsky called the "zone of proximal development" (i.e., the student can add two one-digit whole numbers but cannot add when a two-digit number is introduced or if carrying is required).
5. Depending on the time of year when this process is applied, and keeping in mind that the GLE describes the skills and knowledge a successful student would be expected to learn by the end of a particular grade level, adjust your estimate to account for any additional learning that would be expected to occur during the remainder of the school year. Consider the student's IEP goals when making this adjustment.
6. Repeat steps 2 through 4 for the other strands in the content area.
7. Look at your adjusted estimates for all of the strands, as well as the student's specific GLE profile within each strand. Identify areas of priority by noting areas where the student appears to be furthest behind. Also take note of GLE "clusters" – groups of GLEs in a strand or at a particular grade level that may represent a broad area of need for the student. These clusters may be particularly relevant for IEPs because they can lead to development of goals and objectives that address skill sets rather than isolated skills.
8. Complete Steps 2 through 6 for additional content areas as needed.

If you have questions about this process, please feel free to contact:

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